

Interview with a man, only identified as Callano

American Life Histories, Library of Congress

"Work?" Callano said with a laugh. "Me work? Only suckers work." His rugged, scarred face bore the marks of dissipation but there was dynamic energy in his short and sturdy body. His hands were very large for a man his size, formidable looking hands as he gestured freely while talking. The wavy brown hair was thinning at his temples.

"I know because I tried it. I worked in the stonesheds. I didn't like it though. I wasn't cut out to work steady. What the hell is seven-eight bucks a day? Chickenfeed. I could make more chips shooting craps and playing poker. I quit one day. The night before I made about ninety bucks shooting craps. I was up all night and I didn't feel much like working that day. The boss started riding me in the yard. I don't take that stuff from anybody. Especially not when I got ninety bucks in my pocket. I just looked at him. . . .

"That was during Prohibition and all the boys was running booze. My brothers, the older ones, had a gang bootlegging. They had a bunch of big old Packards and Caddies. I went in with 'em and we made plenty dough. There was dough in that racket all right, and it was fun to bring it in. Times was good then, everybody had money, everybody was spending it. This always was a good spending town. You know how stonecutters are, they're all spenders and they all drink. Granite was going good then.

"We ran mostly ale. We got it in Canada for five bucks a case and sold it here for fifteen or twenty. You could load a lot of ale into those big crates we had. We kept five or six cars on the road all the time. We sold everybody in Barre and Montpelier from the poolroom crowd to the town bigshots. We was sitting pretty them days. A gang from Burlington tried to chisel in but they didn't last long. We highjacked three of their cars one night and they was loaded, what I mean, loaded. We gave them a good beating, we put a couple of 'em in the hospital. They kept away from Barre after that, they didn't bother us no more. We had a tough crew to fool round with, see? We liked to fight too. Nobody messed round much with us. Our gang was ~~ad~~ news. We could drive like hell and fight like hell. We ran a lot of stuff cross that Line, I'm telling you."

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